

# **Having Hard Conversations**

## **Agenda**

**Welcomes, Introductions, Overview of Session**

**Start Your Own Case Study**

**Why We Hesitate Having Hard Conversations**

**Questions to Ask Yourself Before Deciding to Have the Conversation**

**Other Ideas To Think About Before You Speak Professional Language and Outcome Mapping**

**Scripts**

**What If They Say, Etc?**

**Jennifer Abrams Educational Consultant**  
**jennifer@jenniferabrams.com**  
**www.jenniferabrams.com**

## About the Presenter

Jennifer Abrams is an international educational and communications consultant for public and independent schools, hospitals, universities and non-profits. Jennifer trains and coaches teachers, administrators, nurses, hospital personnel, and others on new employee support, supervision, being generationally savvy, having hard conversations and collaboration skills.

In Palo Alto USD (Palo Alto, CA), Jennifer led professional development sessions on topics from equity and elements of effective instruction to teacher leadership and peer coaching and provided new teacher and administrator trainings at both the elementary and secondary level. From 2000-2011, Jennifer was lead coach for the Palo Alto-Mountain View-Los Altos-Saratoga-Los Gatos Consortium's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program.

In her educational consulting work, Jennifer has presented at annual conferences such as Learning Forward, ASCD, NASSP, NAESP, AMLE, ISACS and the New Teacher Center Annual Symposium, as well as at the Teachers' and Principals' Centers for International School Leadership. Jennifer's communications consulting in the health care sector includes training and coaching work at the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula and Stanford Hospital.

Jennifer's publications include *Having Hard Conversations, The Multigenerational Workplace: Communicating, Collaborating & Creating Community* and *Hard Conversations Unpacked – the Whos, the Whens and the What Ifs*. Her upcoming book, tentatively titled, *Swimming in the Deep End: Leadership Skills for Aspiring and Emerging Leaders*, will be out early in 2019. Other publications include her chapter, "Habits of Mind for the School Savvy Leader" in Art Costa's and Bena Kallick's book, *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind: 16 Essential Characteristics for Success*, and her contribution to the book, *Mentors in the Making: Developing New Leaders for New Teachers* published by Teachers College Press. Jennifer writes a monthly newsletter, *Voice Lessons*, available for reading at and subscribing to on her website, [www.jenniferabrams.com](http://www.jenniferabrams.com) and is a featured columnist, writing about *The Deep End* at [www.edCircuit.com](http://www.edCircuit.com) as well as about personal growth and development at [www.eschoolnews.org](http://www.eschoolnews.org).

Jennifer has been recognized as one of "21 Women All K-12 Educators Need to Know" by *Education Week's* 'Finding Common Ground' blog, and the International Academy of Educational Entrepreneurship's 2015 Entrepreneur of the Year. She has been a featured interviewee on the topic of professionalism for ASCD's video series, *Master Class*, hosted by National Public Radio's Claudio Sanchez, and in the lead article, "Finding Your Voice in Facilitating Productive Conversations" for Learning Forward's *The Leading Teacher*, Summer 2013 newsletter; as a generational expert for "Tune in to What the New Generation of Teachers Can Do," published in *Phi Delta Kappan*, (May 2011), and by the Ontario Ministry of Education for their *Leadership Matters: Supporting Open-to-Learning Conversations* video series.

Jennifer considers herself a "voice coach," helping others learn how to best use their voices - be it collaborating on a team, presenting in front of an audience, coaching a colleague, supervising an employee and in her new role as an advisor for Reach Capital, an early stage educational technology fund. Jennifer holds a Master's degree in Education from Stanford University and a Bachelor's degree in English from Tufts University. She lives in Palo Alto, California. Jennifer can be reached at [jennifer@jenniferabrams.com](mailto:jennifer@jenniferabrams.com), [www.jenniferabrams.com](http://www.jenniferabrams.com), and on Twitter @jenniferabrams.

**Our conversations invent us. Through our speech and our silence, we become smaller or larger selves. Through our speech and our silence, we diminish or enhance the other person, and we narrow or expand the possibilities between us. How we use our voice determines the quality of our relationships, who we are in the world, and what the world can be and might become. Clearly, a lot is at stake here.**

**Harriet Lerner, The Dance of Connection**

## **Tensions That Surface AND/OR Competing Commitments**

**Want to be Pleasing**

**Safety**

**Comfort**

**No Sense of Urgency**

**Perfectionism**

**Distrust – Of Self and Other**

**Too Big a Shift in Role Expectations**

**Priorities/Survival**

**Identity**

**Fatigue**

**Personality**

**Intent**

## **What Wins Out & What We Have To Deal With When We DON'T Speak Up – The Tolls of Ambivalence**

### **Pain and Guilt – Anxiety and Loneliness**

- ***“If you want to see someone in real pain watch someone who knows who he is and defaults on it on a regular basis.” (Pat Murray)***
- ***By our own silence we are condoning behavior we don't agree with.***
- ***We may feel lonely – not with the system, not with the ‘renegades’ – we may feel like we don't fit.***
- ***“We feel fraudulent, even invisible, because we are not in the world as we really are.” (Parker Palmer)***
- ***We may feel like we're not fulfilling our obligations.***

### **The Other Person Has Control and Power**

- ***The other person runs the show and runs us.***

### **We Don't Live By Our Principles**

- ***Bottom line values are being compromised.***
- ***“When you walk by incompetence, you lose your moral authority to lead.” Bud Scarr***
- ***We may feel like a hypocrite – not walking our talk.***
- ***“It is one thing to learn a method. It is another thing to commit to a philosophy.” Asa Hilliard***

### **Negative Impact on ALL Students**

- ***What actually happens to the students?***
- ***What do they live with? What do they see?***

**Two of the most significant barriers to the realization of human potential – resignation and dependency – are also often invisible to the casual observer. By recognizing and naming them, we begin the process of shifting from resignation to possibility and from dependency to a sense of personal power.  
Dennis Sparks – Leading for Results**

**Questions to Ask Yourself Before  
Having the Hard Conversation  
With Thanks to Debra Meyerson's Tempered Radicals**

**Timing**

Is this a good time to take a risk and pose a challenge?

Do I have to say anything or will it fix itself on its own?

What is the intensity of this need? Does it need to be handled now or can it wait?

Am I in the right frame of mind to say something or will I become too emotional?

Is this the time for my colleague to hear this? Can he/she hear this now? Or is his/her stress level so high it wouldn't be heard?

Do I have enough information and accurate information about this situation?

Do I prioritize this conversation before another one?

**Stakes**

How high are the stakes for the different parties involved? Is this a fight worth picking?

If I speak up, who or what else will this affect? What is the ripple effect?

Are the negative effects greater than the potential gains if I choose to speak out?

How important is it for the students or staff that I bring this up?

Is what is going on in the classroom unsafe or damaging to students or staff?

Is this something that the "higher ups" need to know about? Is this a contractual situation?  
What rights do I have? What rights does he/she have?

How vulnerable am I willing to get?

Is this imperative to talk about or just somewhat important?

What would happen if I didn't have the conversation?

## **Questions to Ask Yourself Before Having the Hard Conversation With Thanks to Debra Meyerson's Tempered Radicals**

### **Likelihood of Success**

How promising are the hoped for results?

Have I thought through enough what the real problem is so I have it well articulated myself?  
Has it come up before? Is it a pattern?

If I bring this issue up do I have an action plan thought out? Can I support my colleague through the changes I would like to see made? Do I have a game plan in mind?

If I say something is it going to move the person's professional work forward?

### **Options**

Are there better alternative responses to those that would pose a less significant risk?

Are there responses that will enable me to take a stand without overly jeopardizing my credibility?

Has the person been given the opportunity to self-discover this issue and is it on his/her plate?  
Have I tried to bring it up before and what was the response? Is there a way I could help them see it is a concern without going into "hard conversation" mode?

Can this issue be brought up via email or another medium? Which medium would be most effective? Or does it truly need to be said face-to-face?

How do I feel about offering this criticism? Does it give me pleasure or pain? If I am feeling pleasure, is there someone else to speak to the teacher because I will "act out" my attitude and it will be seen?

What am I trying to accomplish and if I speak up will it move me toward or away from that goal?

What are some other ways of thinking about this? Has this always been the case or have there been times when something different has happened?

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**Consequences for Failure**

What are the worst possible outcomes of the different choices? How bad are they, and how likely are they to occur?

No matter the outcome is this something I have to say because I have to say it?

Am I willing to experience the discomfort that might come as a result of bringing up this topic?

**Personal Association- Personal Perspective**

Will this be seen as only “my issue”? Am I outside the interaction and yet commenting on it with “heat”?

Can I say what I want to say and still project acceptance of this person?

Do I have a positive, trusting relationship with this person so I can bring up this concern and have it heard?

Is the person doing something that is really bugging me because it is a pet peeve of mine/a style difference or is this something that needs to change because it is affecting students/staff/the school?

Do I model the correct behavior I am looking for so after I say something I will know I am already walking my talk?

By my silence does this person think I agree with his/her perspective/behavior? Is that ok?

Is there a cultural lens I am wearing that I need to acknowledge and deal with?

How do my beliefs guide me to think this way, and how might other beliefs alter my thinking?

If I trusted this person's intentions would I interpret his/her responses differently?

Why do I hold on so strongly to this view?



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**Do-ability**

Does a response feel do-able? Is there a response that is not overwhelming; that I can help implement even more effectively and would be as helpful?

Is there specific and reliable evidence I can share? How would I present that in a way that can be heard?

If I do bring up the concern is there enough time to really deal with it or will it just cause problems?

Have I thought through why the person might be behaving in this way?  
What external or internal factors are affecting the person? Motivations?

Why would a reasonable, rational and decent person be doing what he or she is doing?  
Can I see the actions through the lens of positive intentions?

Is the behavior I am proposing to as a substitute do-able/teach-able for this individual?

**What are my Top 5 Questions that I might need to ask myself?**

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

# Quadrant Partners

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

# Setting the Stage

**Think about a hard conversation you haven't had with someone. What are the circumstances surrounding the concern? What is bothering you? What are some of the reasons why you haven't said anything yet?**

**You will be using this "case study" throughout the session so please pick a challenge you feel comfortable working on and sharing with others.**

## Conflict's Forms and Role – Robert Garmston

Contention is necessary for sound decision making. Graham (2007) observes, “Purposeful conversations about curriculum and instruction inevitably evoke deep-held beliefs and philosophies ... that will vary across a faculty. When differing opinions are brought out into the open, contention will arise. It is at this point that the successful leader must walk a tight line, encouraging staff members to address contention and work through it, while recognizing the emotional toll that disagreements can take.”

Betty Achinstein (2002) notes that collaboration and attempts at consensus actually generate tension and conflict. Using case studies from two very different schools, she shows that when teachers enact reforms in the name of community, what often emerges is conflict. Whether dealing with teacher collaboration or meeting the needs of a diverse population, conflict within professional communities reflects important differences of beliefs and practices. Her book reframes conflict as constructive when the right tools are used.

Work by Allen Amason (1995) classifies two types of conflict in groups. In affective conflict, personalities become involved, feelings run high, and differences in views become personal. Cognitive conflict is about differences regarding ideas, concepts, and approaches. The most effective groups engage cognitive conflict but avoid affective conflict.

### ***C-type conflict (cognitive)***

Cognitive conflict involves disagreements about substantive differences of opinion. It improves team effectiveness and produces better decisions, increased commitment, increased cohesiveness, increased empathy, and increased understanding. Dialogue is often the medium of choice for fully exploring such differences.

As long as the disagreements among team members focus on substantive, issue-related differences of opinion, they tend to improve team effectiveness. Such cognitive conflict is a natural part of a properly functioning team. C-type conflict occurs as team members examine, compare, and reconcile these differences. It requires teams to engage in activities that are essential to a team's effectiveness. It focuses attention on the all-too-often ignored assumptions that may underlie a particular issue.

Many beginning groups that have not reached higher levels of effectiveness or maturity believe conflict must be avoided at all costs and that any conflict is not productive. As Amason et al. (1995, p. 29) say, “The problem is that, once aroused, conflict is difficult to control.”

### **A-type conflict (affective)**

Disagreements over personalized, individually-oriented matters reduce team effectiveness. Affective conflict lowers team effectiveness by fostering hostility, distrust, cynicism, avoidance, and apathy among team members. This type of conflict focuses on personalized anger or resentment, usually directed at specific individuals rather than ideas. It often emerges when C-type conflict becomes corrupted because members lack the skills or norms to disagree gracefully. In such settings, disagreement about ideas can become personalized.

Under these conditions, not only the quality of solutions declines, but also commitment to the team erodes because its members no longer identify themselves with the team’s actions. The result is a downward spiral of reduced effectiveness. This leads, too often as we have seen in chapter 5, to teams with more negativity than positivity in their interactions.

Destructive conflict produces poorer decisions, decreased commitment, and decreased cohesiveness. Teams that can use C-type conflict without generating A-type conflict develop abilities that other teams do not have. Teams that use the seven norms of collaboration and use strategies to talk about hard-to-talk-about topics successfully engage in cognitive disagreements without personalizing them.

Groups with no cognitive conflict tend to make decisions based on the loudest voices, or the leader’s sentiments. Decisions made this way tend to be low-quality and get little commitment or follow-through.

So, the experts say, conflict is inevitable, even desirable. The emotional baggage we bring to conflict renders it more daunting than it need be. Conflict, says Aikido master Thomas Crum (1997), is just energy in the system, neither good nor bad. It is we who bring unpleasant concepts to it. Treat your opponent respectfully, Crum says, not trying to harm him; rather, use his energy for your aims. Paraphrasing, as described in chapter 6, is a potent verbal form of aikido. It does not “resist” the energy emanating from another, but flows in the direction of the other person’s force.

# Distinguishing Problems to Solve From Polarities to Manage

<b>Problems to Solve</b>	<b>Polarities to Manage</b>
They are not ongoing. There is an endpoint. They are solvable.	They are ongoing. There is not end point. They are not solvable. They must be managed together.
Independent Alternatives	Interdependent Alternatives
They can stand alone. There is no need to include an alternative for the solution to work.	They cannot stand alone. The alternatives need each other to optimize the situation, over time.
Often contain mutually exclusive opposites.	Always contain mutually inclusive opposites.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Should we promote Bill?</li> <li>2. <i>What</i> should we include in our customer survey?</li> <li>3. Should we buy the 200 ton press?</li> <li>4. <i>When</i> was the War of 1812?</li> <li>5. Should we remove one level of management?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tough Love &amp; Gentle Love</li> <li>2. Recognize the individual &amp; Recognize the Team</li> <li>3. Reduce Cost &amp; Improve Quality</li> <li>4. Competing with Others &amp; Collaborating with Others</li> <li>5. Work Commitments &amp; Home Commitments.</li> </ol>

## **Common Polarities in Education**

Jane Kise - Unleashing the Positive Power of Differences:  
Polarity Thinking in Our Schools

### **Not 'Either-Or' but "Yes, And"**

- **Autonomy and Collaboration**
- **Team Relationships and Team Tasks**
- **Clarity and Flexibility**
- **Continuity and Change**
- **Conditional Respect and Unconditional Respect**
- **Work Priorities and Home Priorities**
- **Needs of Students and Needs of Staff**
- **Teacher as Lecturer and Teacher as Facilitator**
- **Centralization and Decentralization**
- **School Responsibility and Social Responsibility**

**Outcome Mapping**  
**Adaptive Schools - Garmston and Wellman**

What is the problem?

What do you want to see instead?

What does it look like/sound like?

Why might the person not be doing the behaviors?

What supports might you offer?

What supports do you need?



## **Internal Resources – Questions to Ask**

- **Does what I am asking the person to do play to a weakness or a strength? Can I work with a strength you know the person has?**
- **Do I need to build the person's mental capacity?**
- **Do I need to build a person's emotional capacity?**
- **What information, tools, and dispositions, values or beliefs or identity definition might this person need to call forth?**
- **What might I need to enforce, value, acknowledge or give permission to in order to help this person do the actions you want them to do?**
- **What barriers might be stopping this person's from exhibiting the required behaviors?**
- **Is there a social force or influence that might need to be acknowledged, worked with or removed?**

Adapted from [Crucial Confrontations](#) – Patterson, Grenny, McMillian and Switzler and [Effective Presentation Skills](#) by

**Personal Challenges-Family Crises,  
Mental Health Concerns, Learning Disabilities, Etc.**

Being the caretaker of a sick child/parent/spouse/partner  
Being a new parent/step-parent  
Other big life events  
Divorce  
Death/Grief  
Financial Troubles  
Physical Illnesses

Depression  
Anxiety  
Alcoholism/Drug addiction  
Anger issues  
Eating disorders  
Traumatic events

Executive functioning/Organizational skills/Memory issues  
ADD/ADHD  
Impulse control  
Autism spectrum – Social pragmatics challenges  
Visual/Auditory processing problems  
Dyslexia

## **CLASH! 8 Cultural Conflicts That Make Us Who We Are**

Hazel Rose Markus, Ph.D. and Alana Conner, Ph.D. (Huffpost Slide Show)

### 1. Whites versus People of Color

The majority of White Americans believe racial discrimination is no longer a problem. Yet thousands of studies show that race strongly shapes how people are treated in schools, workplaces, courtrooms, and even emergency rooms. The brouhaha over Brad Paisley and LL Cool J's "Accidental Racist" also shows that racial tensions are alive and well in the U.S. Whites' assertion that race doesn't matter reflects their independent side, which believes that people are unique and separate from their race, culture, and history. In contrast, people of color's assertion that race matters very much reflects their interdependent side, which is aware that other people see their color first, and their individual qualities second, if at all.

### 2. Men versus Women

Women's entry into men's worlds is now the stuff of a Disney movie. In *Brave*, medieval Scottish princess Merida out-shoots her male suitors and proves herself an able leader. In the process, though, she almost kills her mother. So it goes in the 21st century, where women are surpassing men in education and professional attainment, but often suffering for it. Research shows that the majority of sex differences in people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors come not from biology, but from culture. The result is that women tend to favor their interdependent sides, while men tend to favor their independent sides. When the two sides clash in the workplace, the going gets tough, especially for women.

### 3. Rich versus Poor

The Occupy movement portrayed class struggles as a fight between the 1 percent and the 99 percent. But in the U.S., the biggest divide is between the 70 percent of Americans who don't have a college degree and the 30 percent who do. A college education imparts a sense of oneself as independent, separate, and unique — qualities that white-collar jobs and social circles desire. In contrast, life without a college degree calls for more interdependence, conformity, and cooperation — qualities that blue-collar jobs and worlds require. Colleges not only cultivate independence, but also demand it. With less training in independence, students without college-educated parents earn lower grades and drop out more often than students with college-educated parents.

### 4. Religious Liberals versus Religious Conservatives

People usually think religious conflicts brew over differences in ideology. But our research shows a broader cultural divide. Religious conservatives tend to use the interdependent side of their selves, reflecting their belief in an interdependent God who is more present, connected, and relational. Religious liberals, in contrast, tend to use the independent side of their selves, reflecting their belief in an independent God who is more distant, separate, and abstract. These religious differences drive political disputes. Religious conservatives favor laws and policies that protect more interdependent concerns like protecting family, community, and the church. Religious liberals, however, favor laws and policies that protect more independent concerns like the freedom of speech.

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### 5. East versus West

Who will rule in the 21st century: allegedly more creative Westerners, or allegedly more disciplined Asians? Many people with European heritages use their independent selves to raise independent children, encouraging their charges to express their uniqueness and choose their own paths. Meanwhile, many parents of Asian heritage use their interdependent side to raise interdependent children, setting high standards and then using tough techniques to push their offspring up to scratch. This “tiger parenting” seems to pay off: Asian-American students are overrepresented in the best universities of the U.S. And while Westerners dismiss the genius of the East as one of imitation, not innovation, the East is gaining ground in science, technology, the arts, and even sports.

### 6. Coasts versus Heartland

Although many Americans watch the same television shows, surf the same websites, and shop at the same stores, the cultural differences between U.S. regions can be shocking. People in the Midwest and Southeast (including District 12 of *The Hunger Games*) tend to use their interdependent, connected, and conforming sides, while people in the Northeast and West (including Panem’s Capitol) tend to use their independent, unique, and controlling sides. As a result, many tend to use their independent, unique, and controlling sides. As a result, many Americans who move to a region that does not mesh with their preferred self experience depression and other psychological problems.

### 7. Businesses versus Nonprofits & Governments

Many social and environmental problems now dwarf the ability of any one company, NGO, or government to solve them. And so these organizations are joining forces to tackle global threats, only to see their partnerships fall apart over cultural divides. *Clash!* shows both governments and nonprofits require and hone the interdependent, relational, and cooperative side of people, while businesses require and hone the independent, unique, and competitive side. Because government agencies are accountable to so many stakeholders, their interdependence can take a turn for the pathological, resulting in absurd rules, long delays, and red tape. Nonprofits’ concern with maintaining relationships can likewise get in the way of efficiency and innovation. Businesses, however, too often sacrifice human concerns in the pursuit of profit.

### 8. Global North versus Global South

Most residents of the wealthy Global North will never travel to Latin America, Africa, or other parts of the Global South. And vice versa. In lieu of actual experience, both sides of the economic equator have stereotypes about each other. The media do not help, beaming only the worst examples of Southern chaos and corruption into the Global North, while broadcasting only the worst examples of Northern arrogance and selfishness into the Global South. Yet there is a kernel of truth to these stereotypes. Many Global Northerners favor their independent side, which can seem cold and distant to the Global South. And many Global Southerners favor their interdependent side, which can seem irrational and “tribal” to the Global North.

## Identifying People's Generational Profiles

Think about each generation's "take" on the following concepts:

<b>The Delineators</b>	<b>Boomers</b>	<b>Xers</b>	<b>Millennials</b>
Perspective on work	Career	Job	There will be many careers
Communication style	Diplomatic	Blunt	Easy and open Don't hurt me
View of authority	Impressed	Unfazed	Wants it
Need for approval	Seek validation	Indifferent	Needs it a lot
Perspective on resources	Abundant	Scarce	No worries or lots of worries
Response to policies and procedures	Protective	Mistrustful	Need help with protocols
Relationship to team	Team-oriented	Self-reliant	Been on 'em Can do them
Work ethic	Driven	Balanced	Multi-Task
Focus on work projects	Relationships and results	Tasks and results	Lots of fun and lots of results
Relationship to technology	Acquired	Assimilated	In the DNA
Entitlement	Experience	Merit	Assumed

Adapted from The Xers & The Boomers

### Processing Prompt

Think about how all the generations of educators you work with would relate to these ideas. What are some of the implications of this thinking for you in your work?

## Understanding the SCARF Model

STATUS	CERTAINTY	AUTONOMY	RELATEDNESS	FAIRNESS
<p>If status is your biggest driver, you are naturally competitive. You love winning but hate coming second. It might be having the highest sales record, or the owning the latest technology or throwing the most exuberant party that drives you. It could be beating your personal best. Whatever it is, being top is key.</p> <p>If status rates high in your life, you might need to watch your natural competitive spirit. You might find yourself continuing the argument simply for the sake of winning. Or you might easily be bored if the challenge is missing. You might need to remember to 'just be.'</p> <p>You are however motivated by a good contest so look for ways to bring this into your working and personal life. Competition is the norm in sales environments, the legal profession, and sporting clubs. Focus on areas where you have natural ability and can continue to improve.</p>	<p>If certainty is your biggest driver, you like things planned well in advance and you don't like last minute changes. You have a natural affinity with systems and processes. You are a list person and often find yourself the organizer in social and work situations.</p> <p>With certainty as your biggest driver, be aware that you may naturally limit yourself from doing new (and therefore uncertain) things, even those that could be good for you, like learning new tasks or travelling. You may also react very strongly when people leave things to the last minute or constantly change their mind. Remember they are not doing this just to annoy you!</p> <p>To feel more reward and less threat with certainty as your key driver involves asking questions to make sure you are clear on expectations. Don't wait for others to come to you.</p>	<p>When autonomy is important, you like being in the driver's seat. You like calling the shots and don't like being told what to do or how to do it.</p> <p>Be aware that you may say no to things simply because they are not your idea. You may also need to remember to give other people the opportunity to choose from time to time!</p> <p>If autonomy is your biggest driver, find ways to create more choice, even if you have to stick within defined parameters. Ask for where you can have clear autonomy so you can exercise this. And watch out for tasks where you have to follow other people's orders precisely.</p>	<p>If relatedness is your biggest driver, you find it easy to remember things about other people. You always make the effort socially and hate it when others don't. You find it easy to connect with others and love doing things that make others feel important and special.</p> <p>When relatedness is your biggest driver, be aware that you may expect more from your friends and colleagues that they can give. You may find yourself easily offended when people don't respond to invitations or get back to you with answers.</p> <p>To increase reward and reduce threat around relatedness look for opportunities to connect with others who are important to you. This could be joining a sporting team, organizing an interest group, or phoning family at a certain time each week. Watch out for long terms situations that isolate you from others – such as working on your own.</p>	<p>If fairness is your biggest driver, you are happy if beaten by a better player but hate someone who cheats the system. People who jump the queue really get under your skin, but you'll sign up to a roster that ensures everyone contributes equally.</p> <p>When fairness is important to you, you might find yourself always speaking up for others when sometimes it's okay just to let things slide. Fairness tends to dominate all areas of our lives, so in your relationships make room for other feelings such as simply caring for others.</p> <p>To create more reward and less threat around the domain of fairness, look for ways to get involved. Knowing how decisions are made, or having a say in the process will help. This might be through a career in HR, social justice or policy creation, or getting simply joining in at a community level.</p>

## **HHC Scripting Protocol with SCARF Domains**

**Offer a reassuring statement regarding the meeting.**

**(STATUS, RELATEDNESS, CERTAINTY)**

**Have the intention for conversation clarified and the timeframe and agenda for the meeting. You might need to contrast here – meaning you want to provide context and proportion....if this isn't the last straw, say so. We don't want them to hear more than intended.**



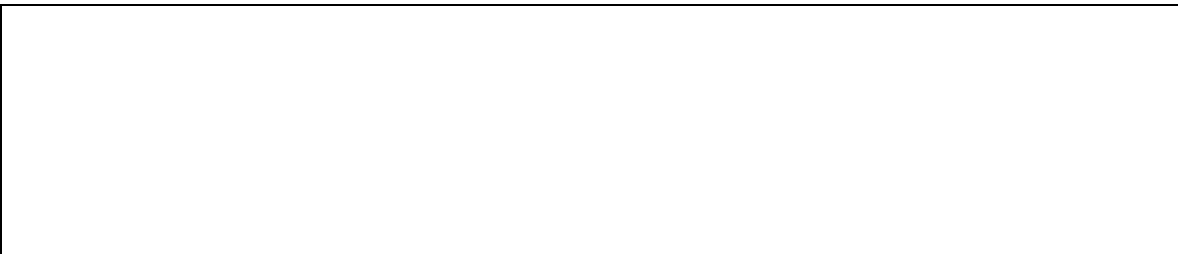
**Name the issue. Speak in professional language and think facts. (CERTAINTY/FAIRNESS – CONNECTED TO STDS)**

**Watch for “trigger” words that won't work for the listener.**

**Think generationally and avoid judgment**

**calls/interpretation in this first sentence. (i.e. – “Your class is chaotic”, “You are difficult” or “You're viewed as being lazy”) No speculation either.**

**If you haven't seen it, you need to have an investigatory conversation, not a hard conversation.**



## HHC Scripting Protocol, continued

**Select a specific example(s) that illustrates the behavior or situation you want to change. And, if there is a pattern and you can describe that as succinctly as possible, do so. (CERTAINTY)**

**POSSIBLE ADDITION - Describe your feelings regarding this issue ONLY if you feel you it is appropriate to share them, and/or it is an interpersonal issue between you and your colleague and it is necessary to share them. (RELATEDNESS)**

**Clarify what the impact is on others and the person, the school or class, etc. Is there a ripple effect not seen? A job at stake, a long-term consequence not recognized, social implications at the school or in the community, personal values compromised?** Adapted from

Crucial Confrontations – Patterson, Grenny, McMillian and Switzler



## HHC Scripting Protocol, continued

**POSSIBLE ADDITION - Identify your contribution to this problem. (RELATEDNESS) If you had a role in this situation/issue, bring it up now if it serves the conversation and it is an interpersonal problem.**

**Indicate your wish to resolve the issue and give specifics as to how it needs to be or could be resolved. (CERTAINTY and/or AUTONOMY)**

**Invite your partner to respond. If you want to know his/her opinion, ask for it. If you want to hear his/her thoughts, tell him. You could also say, “Let me know if you see this differently?” IF you need to end with “Do you understand?” be clear about that too. (STATUS/AUTONOMY/RELATEDNESS)**

## HHC Scripting Protocol, continued

**Notes for you to have in your head after offering the statement. What do you want to make sure gets said before the conversation ends? How will you sum up? Restate what has been learned? Set up another time? Mention action plan items from your outcome map? (CERTAINTY)**

### **Key Things to Remember**

- **Try to sit in silence once you have offered your statement.**
- **Don't keep talking just because you are uncomfortable.**
- **The shorter and clearer your statements are, the sooner the person can process and give you more information that may help you help him or her.**
- **Smothering, excusing, apologizing and getting in the way of someone else's thinking with a hug or your voice won't be as helpful as being quiet and providing a space for them to take in the comments.**
- **Break the habit of seeing the truth as a problem.**
- **"Make it your business to share your truth, make it your listener's business to deal with his feelings." Molly Gordon**
- **"What gives light must endure burning." Viktor Frankl**

Thanks to Fierce Conversations, New Teacher Center, FRISK model, and Acorn Consulting

## **What If They Say? - Possible Responses from Hard Conversations Unpacked**

*“What gives light must endure burning.” Viktor Frankl*

The responses are a *starting* point. Mark Goulston, author of a Harvard Business Review blog, *Don't Get Defensive: Communication Tips for the Vigilant* might call these comments ‘controlled confrontation’ responses. Use them as ideas to work with; to push back at; to rewrite. Make them work for you.

### **Conflict Responses**

**When you are intimidated by someone shouting, name-calling, swearing, threatening.**

“I am open to having this conversation and I know you are angry. And, I will not continue talking with you if you speak at that volume, swear at me, or use that language. Please stop and we can continue the conversation.”

“I am having difficulty hearing your message because your tone of voice is too harsh for me to listen to. Would you please state your need in a more neutral tone?”

“You have every right to feel that way, but no right to express it in an offensive manner. Please restate your objection in a more polite way.”

**When someone responds with general words like “never,” “always” or “every time” instead of talking about a specific situation.**

“While it may seem true that this happens “all the time” or that I never respond. The truth is that is not true. It is an over-generalization. Let’s try to focus the conversation on this specific situation...”

**When someone attacks your personality or identity instead of trying to solve the problem.**

“Remember that you agreed that you would focus on issues rather than personalities. If you can return to the issue at hand, we can continue this important discussion, otherwise I am going to ask that we stop now.”

**When someone bring things up from the past that have nothing to do with the present conflict.**

“I understand that there were experiences prior to this one that you feel have a connection with what we are talking about. At this point, that information isn’t the focus of this *current* conversation. Let’s direct our attention on this *specific* situation.”

**When someone brings something up that is valid, but a completely different topic.**

“I see two different topics are starting to be at play in this conversation. And I am not discounting your point. Both topics are important. Can we start with the topic we first started discussing and then, if we want, we go back to discuss the other?”

**When someone refuses to listen and acts as if this issue isn’t worth talking about.**

“From your vantage point, this might not seem like it is worthy of discussion. However, the impact this action has had on others has made it difficult to.../challenging for \_\_\_\_\_ to do her job. I have a responsibility to bring it up and as a professional on the team, you have a responsibility to engage with this information.”

**When someone wants to be let off the hook**

“Everyone is responsible for this work. While I understand your circumstances (share details), I also understand the need for the student (or the program) that this be finished. What can I do to support you because I am committed to making sure the work is done. Do you have some ideas as to how you can move forward?”

## **When someone needs to push past the letter of the law to the spirit of the law**

“I acknowledge you have done (explain what has been done). And as it was written, the expectation was ‘fulfilled.’ And, going beyond the expectation as it was spelled out in these ways (explain) would have this impact (on your colleagues, on the students, on the school). Here is a next step that would really make the work go up a notch in quality. (Explain). Is that doable?”

## **When someone says, “They don’t treat us like professionals.”**

“Many professions, ours included, have standards and are constantly held accountable to changing expectations and the newest research. Think about doctors and tax accountants and pilots. They are held responsible to doing the work in alignment the latest findings or policies. Professionals hold each other accountable to doing what is best practice. And holding ourselves up to standards is a professional practice.”

## **When someone says, “The District always makes us....”**

“We are the District. All of us. I am included. If you are talking about the District Office, that is another discussion and yet we all have a voice. We can always ask our colleagues for clarification, seek support and ask that those working there address concerns we have. By stating that the District is making us do something gives away our power. We have a sphere of control and influence.”

## **When someone says, “They don’t give us enough time...”**

“I don’t disagree. There isn’t enough time. I have found myself feeling the same way. I have found that this modification helped me make some time.... (add suggestion)...and when I did the positive impact was...And given that we did all agree that this was an expectation and that it isn’t going off the table, what do you suggest what we do next?”

**When someone who is doing the work is frustrated with others who aren't 'on board' and angry you haven't said anything**

“It is frustrating when we feel that we are doing someone more than others are doing. Our fairness threat antenna is triggered. I relate. I might suggest you talk to the individuals yourself. We as a school need to hold each other accountable to doing the work and we collectively responsible to do it. We sometimes cannot wait for others to see our frustrations but manage them ourselves. Do you want some suggestions for how to talk to your colleague?”

**When someone has really triggered you**

“Let's each take a breath here because I'm feeling really reactive and I know until I calm down a bit, whatever I say or do now will only make this conversation worse.”

**When someone says “You have it out for me! You want me to fail!”**

“That is patently false. I do not have it out for you nor do I want you to fail. I want you to succeed and I want the students to succeed too. I am committed to helping you and offering you help and I am also committed to making sure the students are taking care of and that we don't fail them. Let's talk about how you can succeed.”

**When someone says, “You know I have a point! I am right.” (and they are)**

You are right. You are correct. This isn't okay. This \_\_\_\_ was done poorly. And, I too am right. (State the facts on your end) And you too have a responsibility from where you sit to be a part of the solution. I don't disagree that this hasn't moved along the way it should have. The process could have been a better one. And we still need to get to the result. I will agree that... Will you also agree...?

**When someone says, “You are always in the weeds. You don't see the big picture.”**

“We definitely see things from different perspectives and from different places. There is validity in looking at the bigger picture. It helps the district see where we have been and where we are going. It is your job to be up there looking at the organization at that level.

For some of us, we are doing the work of implementing that vision and the focus on detail we need to have is different. The ‘micro’ matters. We need to pay attention to precision and accuracy at our level and it would be helpful if you didn’t call this way of thinking “being in the weeds,” but instead ‘focusing on the details.’

**Or moving someone to the ‘forest level’ when all they can see is the ‘tree level.’**

“You are asking great detail questions. Let’s look at the big picture for a minute. So if we were looking at things from the balcony and not the dance floor, another way to look at this would be...”

**When someone says, “You are so emotional.”**

“I am emotional because I care so deeply about this issue. I realize my tone and my volume can get a bit ‘much’ for some and I will take a look at how my style might get in the way of getting my point across. And, I won’t apologize for my level of concern when it comes to \_\_\_\_\_ because it is too important to be dismissed.”

**When someone says, “How can you change that? She’s always been like that.”**

“I am not discounting that -----’s personality can be really difficult to sit with. And, we need to speak to her about her impact on others. Her personality isn’t the topic of conversation as personalities are hard to change. We are discussing behavior; how behavior impacts us and our ability to work well together and that can change and we would like your help in addressing our concerns about the behavior.

I am not a Trekkie but Star Trek: Voyager’s Lieutenant Tuvok said something wise. “Do not mistake composure for ease.” This work isn’t easy.

## Strategies for Receiving Feedback More Effectively

"One of the greatest gifts is that of being good at disappointment: having non-persecutory, speedy, resilient, emotional digestion." – Alain de Botton

"Others' views of you are input, not imprint. It's information, not damnation." – Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen

### Physical

- Eat. Sleep. When you are physically depleted, you feel things in a different way.
- Watch Amy Cuddy's TED Talk and practice the 'Wonder Woman' pose before the meeting.
- If you are taken by surprise, take two DEEP breaths. Get oxygen to your brain.
- Remember: Squeeze your butt cheeks if you fear you are going to cry. Your focus will go downward.
- If you need a minute, sip a bit of water or coffee. Give yourself a second to get your brain in a space to paraphrase. That means bring water to the meeting.
- Put a mint in your cheek to stay in the moment. Physically stay in your body.



## Strategies for Receiving Feedback More Effectively

### Psychological

- Before you go into a situation you expect to be difficult, ground yourself. Deep breathes. Connect yourself to the earth.
- Create an oval 'bubble' of a strong boundary around you. At least one arm's length in front, behind and on either side of you. Stand firmly in this protective bubble and let the energy of others not penetrate. Hear their words; just keep a sense of self.
- Remember, different cultures listen and give feedback differently – be understanding when it comes at you in a way that isn't your style and try to accommodate for the styles of others.
- Friend failure, don't become it. I have heard many people say, "I'm such a failure." No, actually, you are someone who *has failed*. You, yourself do not *equate to failure*. Be wary of labeling yourself.
- Remember to be in the Learned Optimism (Martin Seligman) state of mind. Don't globalize, localize.
- Continually work on building a 'growth mindset' (Carol Dweck) about life. Don't be fixed in your thinking. Everything can be a learning experience. We are always growing.
- During the conversation, when you notice you are being triggered (perhaps you notice a nervousness in your stomach or tension in your jaw), say hello to the reaction in you, and invite it to sit beside you until the conversation is over. Instead of acting out, you can put the reaction on hold until you have the time and space to nurture it properly. With the time and space you need later, you can learn about what caused that reaction to arise and how you might work with it in the future (from work at <http://www.focusing.org/>)

## Strategies for Receiving Feedback More Effectively

### Verbal

- When someone says, “Can I give you some feedback?” Say, “I am open to feedback and respond best when it is humane and growth producing.”
- You have permission to ask for clarification. If it is fuzzy, ask for clarity. If you don’t understand, ask for more detail. Remember your tone but ask for clarification.

### AND if it still stings...

- If you are still feeling awful, try a self-compassion or loving-kindness (metta) meditation.
- Give yourself a second score – the initial evaluation is not the end of the story. It is how you took a ‘shot at figuring out what there is to learn’ that also matters. (Heen and Stone)

### Statistic about Feedback

The amount of time we need to recover from negative emotions can differ as much as 3,000 percent across individuals.

(Richard Davidson with Sharon Begley - The Emotional Life of Your Brain: How Its Unique Patterns Affect the Way You Think, Feel and Live - and How you can Change Them – Hudson Street Press, 2002, p. 41 and 49)

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